

Bongi's Prepares for Thanksgiving and Today Segment

The *Today* show has come to Plymouth before for Thanksgiving features but now Bongi's Turkey Roost is putting Duxbury on the airwaves as a holiday highlight.

Tom Pierce, grandson of Bongi's founder Tony Bongiorno, said an NBC film crew came to town Monday to visit the famous farm store, one of a very few still in existence in the state. The segment will be aired some time next week prior to Thanksgiving.

The family operation on Summer St. dates back to 1937 and has a long, proud history.

More than 50 years ago, newlyweds Tony and Anna Bongiorno moved to Duxbury, purchasing 7 acres of land off Summer St. for \$400 and proceeded to set up a chicken farm.

During the war years they operated out of a small shop in Quincy where Tony raised about 60,000 chickens a year and sold a maximum of 2 chickens a person to people waiting in long lines.

After the war, Tony and Anna made the switch from chickens to turkeys and became one of 7 turkey farms on "turkey row" (a dirt road that is now Route 53).

In 1947, "Bongi's" was born and the recipes that were written are the ones that are still used today.

The original store was an old motel cabin moved from down the street. Until the expressway was built, Rte. 53 was the main road to the Cape. Soon, stopping at Bongi's for chicken box lunches and turkey pies became a tradition for many Cape-goers, a tradition still observed by many travelers today.

Today, Tony's daughter and son-in-law, Marie and Tom, run the farm and the business. Virtually every young Bongi's member (grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins) have worked for Bongi's at some point in their lives.

Tony and Anna, now in their 80's, still live next door and Tony still comes to work every day. In fact Tony still makes most of the gravy himself.

Over the years the Bongi's motto has remained the same standing the test of time: "All Bongi's turkeys are raised for quality and sold on merit!"

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Made fresh daily and cooked to order with no preservatives, the family this year will raise about 6,500 turkeys and during the holiday season will sell about 3,000 birds. Of those, some 900 will be cooked and stuffed on the premises.

In addition to turkeys and turkey products such as frozen pies, Bongi's will sell a vast array of holiday dinner staples including chicken pies, rolls, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, acorn squash, sauces and salad items.

While everyday is Turkey Day at Bongi's, next week will be particularly busy as lines form for the yearly pickup ritual.

Bongi's starts taking orders for cooked, stuffed turkeys on Oct. 1 and recommends that fresh turkeys be picked up beginning Monday, Nov. 25.

People come from all parts of the state and New England to buy birds, according to Tom, who claims a loyal following of customers spanning generations.

Family pride, service and quality control have earned Bongi's its name locally. Next week, the *Today* show will share that fame with the rest of the country.